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What is claimed is:

1. A method of personalizing voice messages to be used by a voice mail system in interacting with a user based on information provided by the user in an interactive communication between the voice mail system and the user comprising the steps of:

creating a plurality of sets of recorded messages according to distinct personalities for interacting with the voice mail system; and

selecting a recorded message from the plurality of sets of recorded messages based on interactive inquiries between the user and the voice mail system.

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2. The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of personalizing the selected recorded message responsive to the information provided by the user.

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3. The method of claim 2, wherein the personalizing step comprises modifying the speed, dialect, or pitch of the selected recorded message.

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4. The method of claim 1, wherein the creating step comprises automatically creating a set of recorded messages corresponding to the user's own voice and speech patterns using voice recognition.

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5. The method of claim 1, wherein the selecting step comprises:

playing a sample introduction from a plurality of the sets of recorded message while waiting for a selection entry from the user;

affecting a recorded message responsive to the selection entry made by the user; and

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1 affecting a recorded message based on a previous
selection if no selection entry is made by the user.

5 6. The method of claim 5, further comprising the step of
confirming the selected recorded message by playing back to
the user a confirmation message using the same personality as
the selected message.

10 7. The method of claim 1, wherein the selecting step
comprises conducting an interview with the user to determine
an appropriate selection based on responses given by the user.

15 8. The method of claim 1, wherein the selecting step
comprises selecting a pre-determined recorded message based on
identification of the user by voice recognition.

20 9. The method of claim 1, wherein the selecting step
comprises selecting a pre-determined recorded message based on
identification of a calling number using ANI information
contained in data received by the voice mail system.

25 10. The method of claim 1, wherein the selecting step
comprises selecting a pre-determined recorded message based on
identification of a calling number using Caller ID
information.

30 11. The method of claim 1, wherein the selecting step
comprises selecting a recorded message for a person associated
with an entry in an address book.

12. The method of claim 1, wherein the selecting step
comprises:

35 searching a database having entries for associations
between voice patterns of users identified by a voice

1 recognition system and calling numbers according to ANI
information to find a match for a calling number;

5 searching the database to find a match for the user's
voice pattern associated with a matched calling number;

seeking confirmation from the user for a matched voice
pattern using a previously selected personality; and

selecting a pre-determined recorded message based on the
matched voice pattern.

10 13. The method of claim 12, further comprising the step
of adding a new entry in the database for the user associating
the calling number with the user's voice pattern if no match
is found.

15 14. The method of claim 1, wherein the plurality of sets
of recorded messages are used for system prompts to the user.

20 15. The method of claim 14, wherein the interactive
inquiries between the user and the voice mail system is
determined by the system according to the user's competence in
interacting with the system.

25 16. The method of claim 15, wherein the plurality of sets
of recorded messages differ in length and speed.

30 17. The method of claim 15, wherein the user's competence
is determined by a plurality of detection criteria monitored
by the system.

35 18. The method of claim 17, wherein a detection criterion
is the frequency at which the user reaches a particular point
in the system.

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19. The method of claim 17, wherein a detection criterion is the errors made by the user.

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20. The method of claim 17, wherein a detection criterion is the long pauses of the system without user response at the same point in the system on consecutive calls.

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21. The method of claim 17, wherein a detection criterion is how quickly the user halts a message with a selection.

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22. The method of claim 15, wherein the plurality of sets of recorded messages are used for making system-wide changes in level of messages for a particular user.

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23. The method of claim 15, wherein the plurality of sets of recorded messages are used for changing the system prompts at a local point in the system.

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24. The method of claim 1, wherein the user is a subscriber of the voice mail system.

25. The method of claim 1, wherein the user is an outside caller.

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26. An apparatus for personalizing voice messages to be used by a voice mail system in interacting with a user based on information provided by the user in a communication between the voice mail system and the user comprising:

an application module;

a management module;

a media module interconnected to the application module and the management module;

a storage medium connected to the media module, the management module, and the application module;

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means for creating a plurality of set of recorded messages according to distinct personalities for interacting with the voice mail system; and

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means for selecting a recorded message from the plurality of set of recorded messages based on interactive inquiries between the user and the voice mail system.

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27. The apparatus of claim 26, further comprising means for personalizing the selected recorded message responsive to the information provided by the user.

28. The apparatus of claim 26, wherein the means for selecting comprises of

means for playing a sample introduction from a plurality of the sets of recorded message while waiting for a selection entry from the user;

means for affecting a recorded message responsive to the selection entry made by the user;

means for affecting a recorded message based on a previous selection if no selection entry is made by the user; and

means for confirming the selected recorded message by playing back to the user a confirmation message using the same personality as the selected message.

29. The apparatus of claim 26, wherein the selecting means comprises of means for selecting a pre-determined recorded message based on identification of a calling number using ANI information contained in data received by the voice mail system.

30. The apparatus of claim 26, wherein the selecting means comprises of means for selecting a pre-determined

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1 recorded message based on identification of a calling number
using Caller ID information.

5 31. The apparatus of claim 26, wherein the selecting
means comprises of:

means for searching a database having entries for
associations between voice patterns of users identified by a
voice recognition system and calling numbers according to ANI
information to find a match for a calling number;

means for searching the database to find a match for the
user's voice pattern associated with a matched calling number;

means for seeking confirmation from the user for a
matched voice pattern using a previously selected personality;

means for selecting a pre-determined recorded message
based on the matched voice pattern; and

means for adding a new entry in the database for the user
associating the calling number with the user's voice pattern
if no match is found.